# Public Backs Agnew Blast At Networks

11/15/69

By William Greider
Washington Post Staff Writer

Vice President Agnew, portrayed as the lightning rod of the Nixon administration was plugged in to new thunderbolts of public controversy yesterday over his speech attacking the three television networks.

Telephone switchboards at the White House and the TV stations were alive with public reaction—lopsidedly in his favor. Even the young people gathered along the Mall for a Yippie march were preoccupied with Agnew and the speech.

One senator praised his "rare judgment and wisdom," (George Murphy, R-Calif.), while another compared the Vice President to Nazi stormtroopers (Vance )Hartke, D-Ind.).

One congressman dismissed the speech as more "bumblefooting" (Rep. John Moss, D-Calif.); but a colleague praised it for raising "a subject that long, desperately needed to be brought out into the open" (Rep. Samuel Stratton, D-N.Y.).

"The Vice President," proclaimed Sen. Paul Fannin (R-Ariz.) "has applied the prod to a Sacred Cow and the bellowing is being heard across the land."

**See AGNEW, A7, Col. 6**

*Broadside attack baffles network teams. Page A7.*

# Draws Wide Support From Public

AGNEW, From A1

The Vice President, proclaimed Pierre Salinger, former White House press secretary, delivered "one of the most dangerous speeches ever given by a high public official."

In contrast, Dean Burch, the newly appointed chairman of the Federal Communications Commission which regulates the television industry, said the complaints raised by Agnew were "thoughtful, provocative and deserved careful consideration by the industry and the public."

Burch, in fact, had personally asked the three networks for transcripts of their commentary on President Nixon's Vietnam speech Nov. 3—commentary which Agnew denounced as "hostile." The FCC said Burch's request, made two days after the President's speech, stemmed from complaints from "correspondence and other sources." Broadcast circles consider it unusual for the FCC chairman to express personal negative reaction even to a network channel.

The strong criticism and sharp dissent was provoked by the eight-page address which Agnew delivered Thursday night before a Republican banquet in Des Moines. Some, he said, among other things, that the TV network news is controlled by "a tiny and closed fraternity of privileged men," is unfair to the President and unrepresentative of the nation.

He characterized the TV newsmen and their studio producers as being under the heavy influence of East Coast media and political pattern, their news selection, he said, emphasizing the bad news over the good, the negative over the positive.

While most of the reactions from public officials followed predictable party lines, Agnew's speech mixed several themes which, by no means, appeal exclusively to Republicans. The question of concentrated power in the television industry and the public's access to broadcasting has been raised in the past by a variety of critics—from the Negro minority in the South to George Wallace to white radicals in the North.

For example, the subject came up yesterday among 10 students gathering along the Mall for a march on the Justice Department in connection with the anti-war Moratorium. They surrounded a TV newsman and argued that Agnew was right, but for the wrong reasons. TV news, they insisted, is biased in favor of the Establishment—and excludes their radical viewpoint.

In New York City, a coalition of the Black Caucus of the City Council, a rabbi of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations and other public figures to TV boycott Dec. 2 and 3 to protest what they said is the exclusion of minority viewpoints from the news.

[illegible]

[illegible] Agnew's speech [illegible] the White House [illegible] Agnew [illegible] on [illegible] with good cheer [illegible] his own office, his harried staff counted 4,500 telegrams supporting his speech, and 64 against. Close to 1,500 phone calls were received there, roughly [illegible] in his favor (Agnew himself was away yesterday, attending the Apollo 11 launching in Florida).

The calls to television stations, though less lopsided, also were heavily in his favor. In Washington, for instance, WTOP-TV by late afternoon Friday had counted 1,267 for him and 410 against. The Associated Press surveyed a random sample of radio and television stations across the nation and found the immediate response was [illegible] in support of the Vice President.

The White House, as it has done after Agnew's other controversial speeches in recent weeks, disclaimed any advance knowledge. Presidential Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said President Nixon did not see an advance copy, but watched the address on TV.

"As I have said before, we don't have censorship in this administration," Ziegler said.

But the search over Agnew's [illegible] was not much other criticism. The other main theme of the Vice President's speech, his emphasis on [illegible] the good news rather than the bad—and his denunciation of those who criticize the President's Cambodia [illegible] FCC Chairman Burch's personal interest in the [illegible] talk [illegible] the question of [illegible] information for some.

[illegible] Agnew's [illegible] Mansfield said [illegible] Agnew's hard language would further [illegible] the nation's divisions.

He should try to bridge the differences that divide us and should not [illegible] speak constructively," Mansfield said.

His minority whip, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, but in more forcefully, said [illegible] attack contained to put American against American—an attack with the ultimate aim of dividing the country into those who support and those who do not support our President's position on Vietnam. If it is allowed to go on unchallenged, it will be tragic."